

Making Sense of A Pluralist World
The Sixth Pan-European Conference on International Relations
Turin, Italy, 12-15 September, 2007

Section 4-1
Paper 1

**Peace and International Security:
Meta-Theoretical Conversations**

By

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The Theory and Practice of Democratic Peace

Democratic peace theory is generally considered to be one of the substantial empirical findings of contemporary Western discourse. (Oneal and Russett 2001:10; Henderson, 2006) In broad terms, the theory states that democracies rarely wage war against each other. The essence of the theory goes back to Immanuel Kant's Perpetual Peace, published in 1795. (Doyle, 1983; Cavallar 2001; Cederman 2001)

The Bush administration's ambitious project of "global democratization" has been largely based on the proposition of democratic peace (Steele, 2007; Russett, 2005) In his State of the Union address in January 2004 Bush literally invoked the idea for legitimization of his administration's international interventions:

America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace, a peace founded upon a dignity and rights of every man and woman. America acts in this cause with friends and allies at our side, yet we understand our special calling: This great republic will lead the cause of freedom. (Quoted in: Steele, 2007: 39-40)

The practical implementation of democratization for peace and international security, however, has brought some unexpected results. The chaos and violence that have followed the "liberation" of the Iraqi people are desperately far from the idealistic expectations of the designers of the invasion. The unintended consequences of the international "democratization crusade" include, among other things, empowering Hamas, adding to the intractability of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and strengthening the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Moreover, aggressive U.S. attempts to export democracy have alienated European allies and, thus, have created a split within the democratic international community itself.

Today it is almost commonplace to hear that the U.S. promotion of democracy as a means of bringing peace and international security has failed. In the words of Brent J. Steele, the proponents of democratic peace "have been confronted by events in international politics that could effectively tarnish the presumptions that have made democratic peace seem so rational, reasonable and logical." (Steele, 2007, p. 48)

Aporia of Democratization

One of the most paradoxical events of the current wave of democratization is (to a greater or lesser degree) the notable grass-roots rejection of and resistance to democratization in many transitional societies. The most striking example of the popular resistance to democratization is that of Iraq. A less dramatic but still significant example of such rejection is the political development of Russia. While the Western world laments the decline of democracy in Russia, 66% of Russians think that the best kind of governance for Russia is strong leadership, while only 28% favor democracy, according to a comprehensive poll conducted in 2005 by the Pew Research Center.

Additional examples of public distrust of democratization could be given, but the point is simply that, time and again, we see the Western (American) efforts of democratic, popular empowerment being popularly rejected in many parts of the world. This strange phenomenon can be called the “aporia of democratization” or “aporia of democratic empowerment.”

Modern or Post-Modern

The grass root rejection of Western style democratization may be an indicator of a larger phenomenon. Namely, the modernist belief in linear social progress toward Western liberal democracy as a means to achieve international peace and security has been challenged by the post-modern multiplicity of claims to security and protection of peace by various discursive communities. They offer different, often opposing epistemologies of global politics that include, among others, Muslim (Arab) claims of being besieged, the Americans’ “war on terror,” Russia’s quest, and the North-South divide – all putting forward their own “claims to truth” about justice, peace and security.

One sad ontological ramification of this “clash of narratives” is the phenomenon that Hannah Arendt called the “banality of evil” – the tragic easiness of cruelty by ordinary agents socialized in a particular intersubjective understanding (indoctrinated in the dominant narrative) of their respective communities. A vicious circle of cruelty emerges, as inimical social structures are created, recreated and reinforced by the agents who themselves have been created by those structures. In this regard, one can see elements of sad kinship between such different agents as, for instance, Guantanamo guards and Muslim terrorists. In the words of Nicholas Onuf, (1998:59) “people make society, and society makes people.”

The Design of the Paper

This paper is inspired by an old-fashioned (modernist) hope that the over-arching relativity of models of peace and international security is relative itself. The hope is that there can be found some common sense or shared meaning in the endlessly subjective play of perspectives of different discursive communities. We start with a brief analysis of the unique dramas of peace and security outlined in the dominant narratives of a few different communities. We compare these different perceptions of peace and international security to see if they have some common signifiers. We then analyze the findings of this comparison against the premises of the theory of democratic peace and address the present-day “aporia of democratization.”

The theoretical background of this paper is constructivist, more than liberal-idealist. In other words, we assume the mutual or interactive constitution of structures and agents and the respective contextuality and historicism of social existence. Consequently, a search for common meaning is a quest for commonality among different cultural and historical traditions (in a Hegelian sense) rather than a search for signifiers of timeless and universal humanity (in a Kantian sense).

War and Peace – The U.S. Vision

For many people, the story of today's popular American perspectives on war and peace starts with the attacks of September 11, 2001. Many consider those events, at the dawn of the new millennium, as marking the beginning of the contemporary era in international politics. The roots of the current popular narrative, however, may well have started a decade or more earlier. Not the fall of the World Trade Center, but the fall of the Berlin Wall set the stage for the increasing popularity of neoconservative foreign policy. Victory in the Cold War was the moral victory of liberal democracy over the alternative ideology of communism. I was on the other side of the (fallen) Iron Curtain at that time, and even we, confused and struggling to understand the new realities as we were, felt the liberating inspiration of "our defeat." Belief in and adherence to the concepts of liberal-democratic polity, which had always been strong in the West and the U.S., attained nearly global ascendance.

It was the time when Francis Fukuyama famously announced "the end of history" through the final triumph of liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 2006) Arlo Guthrie expressed the same sentiment in the language of popular culture, when he described one of his concerts somewhere in Eastern Europe shortly after the fall of the Berlin War. According to Guthrie, there were "thirty thousand people" who "showed up" for the concert and "every one of them knew the words" of Elvis Presley's "I can't Help Falling in Love with You!" Arlo felt so proud to come from a country whose songs were sung by people all around the world – so proud to be an American. This story illustrates the idea that many Americans (and others too) believe America to be "exceptional" and the story also underlines the thesis that the ideological victory of the free world over the Communist would probably consolidate America's position as the leader of the free world and its views on how the world should be ordered; i.e. the idea of American exceptionalism.

The attacks on September 11 happened against that background. The widespread and inevitable sense of insecurity following the attacks, merged with the popular perception of America's rightful and exceptional mission to share its ideas and ideals with other people. In his address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American people following September 11, George W. Bush captured this popular sentiment really well:

Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber - democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms - our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech; our freedom to vote and assemble, and disagree with each other. . . . These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way a way of life. With every atrocity they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us because we stand in their way.

We are not deceived by their pretenses to piety. We have seen their kind before. They are heirs of the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions - by abandoning every value except the will to power - they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends: in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies. (Bush, G.W. Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People, The White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed August 28, 2007)

Taken in this context, the 2004 re-election of George W. Bush does not seem too puzzling. Neoconservative visions of rightfulness, justice and security, as expressed by the Bush administration, are based on perceptions to which many ordinary Americans relate. Journalist John B. Judis describes his experience with the voters in a white, working-class neighborhood in the small city of Martinsburg, West Virginia. On Sunday before the presidential elections he “had difficulty digging up anyone who didn’t plan to vote for George W. Bush.” Judis writes:

As far as I could tell, Martinsburg voters were backing him for two reasons: First, because he opposed gay marriage and abortion (“There are two gays around the corner who are voting for Kerry,” one fellow, with a Bush sign in his yard, advised me scornfully from his stoop); and second, because he was leading the war on terrorism (“I feel more safe with Bush in there,” an elderly disabled man explained. (Judis, 2007: 17)

In more academic terms, the theory behind the neoconservative perspective on peace and security has been well expressed by Rudolph W. Giuliani:

America is a nation that loves peace and hates war. At the core of all Americans is the belief that all human beings have certain inalienable rights that proceed from God but must be protected by the state. Americans believe that to the extent that nations recognize these rights within their own laws and customs, peace with them is achievable. To the extent that they do not, violence and disorder are much more likely. Preserving and extending American ideals must remain the goal of all U.S. policy, foreign and domestic. But unless we pursue our idealistic goals through realistic means, peace will not be achieved. (Giuliani, 2007: 4)

The Russian Story: War, Peace and more

Most ordinary Russians hardly miss the 1990s, those years of instability, economic devastation and the confusion of values. In those turbulent times, not only did material life severely deteriorate, traditional value systems also shattered. By the fall of 1991 Russia’s domestic production had declined 13% in comparison with 1990, the budget reached an unprecedented 30% of GDP, and the annual rate of inflation ballooned to 93%. Socially, there was a general feeling of confusion and betrayal in the bitter-sweet liberation from Communism. Everything that the Soviet state’s educational system and propaganda taught their citizens (the superiority of public over private property, justice as egalitarianism and economic equality, the reliability of the state to provide for citizens, etc.) suddenly turned out to be PLAIN WRONG.

New, rather impatient teachers of democracy began talking to the confused ex-Soviets about personal responsibility and civil society – rather vague concepts just yesterday considered to be among the features of capitalist instability, inequality and exploitation. Bewildered and hopeful, the ex-Soviet people tried to learn the art of this new free life. Unfortunately, the shock of denationalization and market reforms in Russia were often perceived by the weary population as a confirmation of the Soviet-time tales of the inhuman and greedy nature of capitalism. A popular joke in Moscow of that time said: Everything that the Soviet authorities used to tell us about Communism turned out to be wrong. Everything negative that they told us about capitalism turned out to be right.

Such was the domestic context for Russians in the 1990s. As to foreign policy, Russia defeated in the Cold War became agreeable and oriented toward partnership with the West. That attitude in foreign policy continued beyond the 1990s and Yeltsin's "years of chaotic liberty" and into Putin's "restoration" of traditional Russian state philosophy. Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to call George Bush minutes after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Moscow permitted flights over Russian airspace by U.S. and NATO planes on the way to Afghanistan. Russia accepted U.S. bases in the former Soviet Central Asia, shared its intelligence resources in Afghanistan, etc.

This generous cooperation on international peace and security occurred simultaneously with changes in Russia's domestic policies. The new Russian president, Vladimir Putin, felt that the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the major geopolitical disaster of the twentieth century." (Aron, 2007: 312) In the words of Leon Aron, "the traditional postulates of Russian state philosophy were returning in force: The state is tantamount to society; all that is good for the state is automatically good for the country; and the strengthening of the state means the strengthening of society." Accordingly, "The Kremlin now saw the radical decentralization of politics and economics undertaken in the 1990s as wrong in principle and harmful to the country's interests." (Aron, 2007: 311). Most ordinary Russians welcomed the changes in policies as bringing back elements of familiar, traditional social justice and order, as well as helping to restore the Russians' wounded national pride. President Vladimir Putin had a growing domestic approval rating, which reached the enviable level of close to 80%.

Domestic popular approval of Kremlin policies, however, has been in stark contrast to foreign policy disappointments. Russian efforts to foster security cooperation with the U.S. have not been fully reciprocated. Russian "special interests" in former Soviet countries have been challenged by the "Orange" revolution in Ukraine and the "Rose" revolution in Georgia. Russia has seen those revolutions as set up by Washington. NATO's expansion to the East, with its gradual inclusion of former Warsaw Pact countries, then its fast acceptance of the former Soviet republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and, now, the apparent U.S. sponsorship of Ukraine and Georgia for NATO membership, has been perceived as violating Russia's "sphere of influence." Criticism of human rights violations in Chechnya, as well as of the Kremlin's harsh policies toward independent media and NGOs, has added to the tensions. The recent disagreements over the deployment of an anti-missile shield in Poland and Czech Republic finalize the picture. Summing up, Russia feels that its attempts to cooperate with the west have not been appreciated by the latter.

In this context, the current Kremlin position on peace and international security seems to be very logical. In talking about Russia's recent tests of new ballistic missiles and its possible withdrawal from the CFE treaty, Putin characterized these actions as aiming to protect peace and international security. He said:

There is no need to fear Russia's actions, they are not aggressive. These actions are aimed at maintaining balance in the world order, and they are extremely important for maintaining peace and security globally. We are not the initiators of this new round of the arms race. (Our partners) are stuffing Eastern Europe with new weapons. A new base in Bulgaria, another in Romania, a site

in Poland, a radar in the Czech Republic... what are we supposed to do? We cannot just observe all this. Certain members of the international community wish to dictate their will to everyone, despite the norms of international communication and law. Attempts by some actors in international relations to impose their will on others are nothing other than diktat and nothing other than imperialism. This needs to be stated as it is... Our position is open, absolutely transparent and market-based for all our partners, regardless of current political relations. (Moscow News, May 31, 2007, <http://mnweekly.ru/news/20070531/55254653-print.html> (accessed July 20, 2007))

The Muslim Story: War, Peace and More

In 2005 the new U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, said:

If you believe, as I do and as President Bush does, that the root cause of the 11 September attacks was the violent expression of a global extremist ideology, an ideology rooted in the oppression and despair of the modern Middle East, then we must seek to remove the very source of this terror by transforming this troubled region. (Quoted in Kathleen Moore, *World: Four Years Later, No Clear Winners in War on Terror*, <http://www.Globalsecurity.org/security/library/news/2005/10/sec-051007-rferl02.htm> (accessed July 25, 2007))

This optimistic plan, however, has not been taken at its face value. The motives and meaning of the U.S. program of ‘transformation’ of the Middle East have found very different interpretations by the Muslim audiences. The distrustful logic of suspicion of the Western (especially – the American) policy toward the Muslim world goes back to the legacy of European imperialism with its “white man’s burden” to “civilize lesser people.”

Today’s public tends to look for a hidden agenda in all of the U.S. policies in the region. As an Egyptian businessman remarked regarding the American concerns about the atrocities in Western Sudan: “What is it that America wants in Sudan? Is there oil there? Uranium?” (Quoted in “Always prickly, sometimes paranoid, occasionally pragmatic.” *The Economist*, August 7, 2004: 37, Middle East and Africa section) The narrative of Western (American) polity of domination and exploitation is formative for Islamic popular and scholarly discourses alike. For instance, during the Friday prayer in Tehran, which is being broadcast all over Iran and around the world, the preacher routinely explains the policies and the motives of the United States: “That carnivorous wolf is not of the type to enter negotiations. America is only after securing its own hegemony.” (*The Revolution Strikes Back. A Special Report on Iran*, *The Economist*, July 21, 2007: 2) On the theoretical level, there is a whole body of scholarship dedicated to the Islamic opposition to corrupt Western culture. For example, the popular theoretician Said Qutb wrote:

In any time and place human beings face that clear-cut choice: Either to observe the law of Allah in its entirety, or to apply laws laid down by man of one sort or another. That is the choice: Islam or *jahiliyya*. Modern style *jahiliyya* in the industrialized societies of Europe and America is essentially similar to the old-time *jahiliyya* in Pagan and nomadic Arabia. For in both systems, man is under the dominion of man rather than Allah. (Quoted In: *In the Name of God. A Survey of Islam and the West*, *The Economist*, September 13, 2003: 4)

These ideas find a surprisingly large audience. Only a modest 3% of respondents in Palestinian territories, 10% in Kuwait, 12 % in Jordan and Morocco and 13 % in Egypt agreed with the statement that it was good that American ideas and customs were

spreading in their cultures. These numbers indicate wide-spread concerns over the perceived threats to the cultural security of Muslim societies.

The narrative of double-guessing the real motives for U.S. (Western) policies toward and actions in the Muslim world is not restricted just to Islamic audiences. It is present in the United States, as well as in the West in general, both in popular and scholarly discourse. In academia, these ideas are being most obviously expressed in Orientalist and post-colonial studies. However, even in our own association's journal, *International Studies Perspectives*, a certain distrust in the declared motives of U.S. policy is apparent. For example, discussing the U.S. support for the unpopular autocratic regimes in the Middle East, Marc J. O'Reilly and Wesley B. Renfro write,

In post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, Washington pursues formal empire via an occupation that aspires to defeat a virulent Sunni-sponsored insurgency, as well as al-Qaeda fighters and other jihadists, while assisting in the political and economic reconstruction of the country. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, however, Washington opts for informal empire courtesy of its "emirates" strategy, whose hallmarks include military bases and reciprocity – U.S. protection in exchange for abundant and affordable Gulf oil, most obviously. (O'Reilly and Renfro, 2007: 138)

They continue:

Notwithstanding the soaring rhetoric about turning Iraq into a model democracy despite its despotic past, the White House, without any fanfare, has continued to implement a strategy capable of achieving Washington's long-standing regional economic and security goals regardless of what transpires in Iraq. With Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and its aftermath, Bush pere initiated a "GCC" strategy. His son used it to prosecute a policy of regime change in Iraq without endangering U.S. supremacy in the Gulf. At the urging of the Saudi government, George W. Bush and his administration then modified it by withdrawing forces from Saudi Arabia and redeploying them to other Gulf monarchies. The evolved "emirates" strategy aimed to limit U.S. liabilities while preserving American preponderance in the region. (O'Reilly and Renfro, 2007: 138)

One can bring many more examples of expressions of distrust and grievances toward U.S. policies in the Muslim world and double-guessing of U.S. motives. The concrete narratives of resentment include the stories of dispossessed Palestinians, of the U.S. military presence in Muslim lands (including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq), of U.S. support for corrupt regimes, etc.

One of the most vivid expressions of and violent responses to these common grievances is Osama Bin Laden's now famous "Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders," that directly stated:

To kill Americans and their allies, both civilian and military, is the individual duty of every Muslim who is able, *until the Aqsa mosque [in Jerusalem] and the Haram mosque [in Mecca] are freed from their grip, and until their armies, shattered and broken-winged, depart from all the lands of Islam.*" (Quoted in: *In the Name of God. A Survey of Islam and the West*, The Economist, September 13, 2003: 3. Emphasis added.)

This declaration was issued three years before 9/11. With all its blood-freezing bent on mayhem, Bin Laden's words give reasons and perceived justifications for anger, with which many millions of much more moderate Muslim people around the world can

identify. The difference between the Islamists and moderate Muslims is less in the assessment of the Western (American) treatment of Muslims (they all agree that the treatment is unjust) than in the choice of means to respond to the injustice. For example, according to the last month's Pew Global Attitudes survey, the vast majority of Muslims surveyed have low regards of the United States. The percentage of people having "unfavorable views of the U.S." constituted 78 % in Egypt and Jordan, 86% in Palestinian territory, 83% in Turkey, 68 % in Pakistan and 56 % in Morocco. According to the same survey, 81 % of respondents in Turkey, 72 % in Pakistan and 71 % in Palestinian territory disliked "the American ideas about democracy." (Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Released June 27, 2007, [http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php? ReportID=256](http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256) (accessed July 27, 2007).

To complete the picture, the following passage from The Economist's Survey of Islam and the West well summarizes the popular appeal of Islamic ideology,

The Islamists tend to have large and active memberships, often linked to mosques, who combine impressive welfare work with what is known as *dawa* (spreading the faith), designed to Islamize society from the grassroots. And whereas "civil society" in most poor countries is starved of money, cash pours into the Islamists. This makes them powerful even when they are not in power. "It would not be an exaggeration", says Graham Fuller, a former vice-chairman of the CIA's National Intelligence Council, "to state that the Islamists are probably more focused on civil society and the creation of institutions within it than any other political force in the Muslim world." (In the Name of God. A Survey of Islam and the West, The Economist, September 13, 2003: 9)

One can conclude that the Muslim narrative of injustice, exploitation and suffering is very popular in the world of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*.) In this context, the logic of the anonymous saying "your terrorist is my freedom fighter" seems to be quite convincing. The very terminology defining the terrorist activities as *martyrdom* reflects the underlying discourse of Muslim insecurity and victimization.

Comparison of the Narratives: The Issue of Justice

The narratives presented above constitute three sharply distinct stories of international relations, security and the quest for peace. Despite the differences, all of the narratives seem to have a common legitimization mechanism: Each claims to be talking from the position of justice. They all are inspired by a common idea that if only some agents would not act unjustly, there would be peace and international security. The problem with these claims is, of course, the existence of other, very different narratives, with similarly strong claims to universal justice. In other words, as convincing as the Russian, the American, the Muslim or any other narrative may appear to the insider, the competing stories of another community are just as convincing for its respective members.

Recognition of the internal "subjectivity" of justice prompted historical attempts to devise theories of impartially ("objectively") just societal arrangements. Most of those theories, from utilitarian to intuitivist ones, deal with the principles of organization of internal societal institutions, rather than with international relations. Most notable of these theories is John Rawls' theory of justice, aimed at creation of

A conception of justice which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract as found, say, in Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. In order to do this we are not to think of the original contract as one to enter a particular society or to set up a particular form of government. Rather, the guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association. These principles are to regulate all further agreements; they specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into and the forms of government that can be established. This way of regarding the principles of justice I call justice as fairness. (Rawls, 2005: 11)

The landmark of Rawls' impartial and equal "original position" is the situation of the parties behind "the veil of ignorance", unaware of their concrete circumstances. (Rawls, 2005: 136)

There are, however, some problems with Rawls' truly ground-breaking and famous theory of justice. First, it is aimed at perfectly rational individuals, neglecting the inevitable emotionality of our concrete existence, embedded in our life-worlds and reflected in our life-choices. Second, Rawls' theory is aimed at universal and ahistorical individuals, while the human condition is inevitably grounded in the contextuality of the "here and now."

The quality of the inevitable subjectivity and the "contextuality" of justice is captured in Jacques Derrida's approach to the issue. Analyzing the issues of justice with his overarching rejection of "logocentrism," Derrida argues that there is no objective standard of justice, no **objectively just** narrative which can become a center or a touchstone, and against which all other claims to justice can be measured. In this sense, Derrida makes a statement with which one can agree:

"No justification discourse could or should ensure the role of metalanguage in relations to the performativity of institutive language or to its dominant interpretation." (Derrida, 2002: 241-242)
He also writes: "The very emergence of justice and law, the instituting, founding and justifying moment of law implies a performative force, that is to say always an interpretive force and a call to faith." (Derrida, 2002: 241)

In other words, no particular social arrangements (institutions), be they the rules of Sharia or the institutions of social democracy, can claim the legitimacy of the just or the rightful. All that they can claim is the agency of their believers.

One can conclude that claims for justice cannot serve as common legitimization mechanisms for different narratives of war, peace and security. Moreover, differences among narratives of justice and security of different political societies indicate more than the clash of interpretation of facts. If we do not want to restrict ourselves to a purely realist mode of explanation, we have to acknowledge that those differences between the narratives also indicate the clash of normative considerations. The very fact that for one community a normative basis for policy justification is the will of Allah, for another, it is individual liberty and human rights, for yet another – the protection provided by the state, shows the clash of epistemic models and, using the words of Nicholas Onuf (Onuf, 1989: 293) the clash of "paradigms of experience," which are based on those epistemologies.

Comparison of the Narratives: Legitimacy through Agency

There is, however, a strikingly common source of legitimization of each of the narratives. The common signifier is the collective agency or the will of the people. Be it the high approval rating of President Vladimir Putin of Russia, popular election of Hamas to the Palestinian legislature or the re-election of George Bush – it is the people's will that legitimizes the policies and empowers the politicians. The time of Plato's aristocratic philosopher-kings seems to be gone. *Vocce Populis* is the source of legitimate power for every narrative today. Talking about the current times as a "democratic age" Fareed Zakaria profoundly writes:

From its Greek root, "democracy" means "the rule of the people." And everywhere we are witnessing the shift of power downward. I call this "democratization," even though it goes far beyond politics, because the process is similar: Hierarchies are breaking down, closed systems are opening up, and pressures from the masses are now the primary engine of social change. *Democracy has gone from being a form of government to a way of life.* (Zakaria, 2004: 13-14. Emphasis added)

This situation of "global democratization" brings us back to the "aporia of democratization" stated in the beginning of this essay. We are, de facto, facing the paradoxical situation of the **democratic rejection of democracy**. Sometimes this rejection happens through electoral procedures. E.g., though initially empowered through democratic procedures, Hamas has since established strict Sharia rule in the Gaza Strip, the territory now under its sole control. At other times the democratic rejection of democracy happens through direct grass-roots activities, such as the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. But in any case, it is the critical mass of the ordinary agents of a particular polity that makes the difference.

There are a couple of related observations one can make concerning the situation created by U.S. attempts to trigger a new wave of democratization. First, the situation can be interpreted as an edifice (even if a distorted one) of democratic empowerment – different agents freely express their preferences and stand for their choices. Second, the situation emphasizes the crucial importance of mass agency (the demos) in the contemporary world.

These two observations – and the fact that the efforts to establish democratic peace through this wave of democratization, so far, have evidentially failed due to competing claims for justice and the provision of security put forward by "other" political communities (their narratives) – leads one to look closely at the interactions among narratives. It seems that the power of a narrative can be measured almost exclusively by the agency the narrative can inspire, mobilize and create. Any narrative exists through its agents while the agents are shaped by the narrative. ("Rules make agents out of individual human beings by giving them opportunity to act upon the world", Onuf, 2001: 64) This iterative process means that a peace building activity that goes beyond military pacification (especially – the practice of democratic peace) is a fight (competition) for agency. The idea that peacebuilding activities involve competition for agency brings us to a third observation.

If there are to be further attempts to practically implement democratic theory (like the Bush administration's attempts to implement democratic peace theory) the architects of such attempts may want to pay more attention to the aspects of democratic theory dealing with agency development, in addition to centering on the aspects dealing with the creation of institutions (as has been done so far).

Social Construction of Democracy: From the Public Sphere to the Voting Booth?

There are a number of models (sub-theories) within democratic mega-theory and practice. In his fundamental work David Held identifies ten different models of democracy. (Held, 1996) In contrast, Besson and Marti broadly divide contemporary theories of democracy into about four groups (Besson and Marti, 2006). Among others, they identify

- (i) economic theories of democracy (Elster, 1986) that refer to voters as consumers and democracy as a market;
- (ii) pluralist accounts of democracy that do not accept the notion of a distinct common good and are concerned with the possible domination of one group over another (Dahl, 1956 and 1989; Truman, 1968; Ely, 1980);
- (iii) so called “agonistic theories of democracy” that are built around the acknowledgement of the inevitability of conflict and divergence in politics (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 1993 and 2000; Tully, 1995); and
- (iv) theories of “deliberative democracy.”

It is the theories of deliberative democracy, especially those which are centered on the discussion of the public sphere, that appear to pay the closest attention to the issues of democratic agency. The term “deliberative democracy” was introduced in 1980 by Joseph Bessette (Bessette, 1980) to refer to a particular brand of constitutional democracy. Francis Cheneval defines deliberative politics as “a form of communication within and among democratic peoples, polities, legal communities and society at large.” (Cheneval, 2006: 161) This conception of democracy claims to be coherent with the thoughts of the American Founding Fathers (Bessette, 1980; Besson and Marti, 2006), who were inspired by the ideal, later expressed by Lincoln, of the “government *of* the people, for the people and *by* the people.” Deliberative democratic politics “is organized around an ideal of political justification.” (Cohen, 1996; Quoted in Besson, 2006) At the center of deliberative democracy are issues of justification of “claims to truth” (“narratives of justice”) put forward by different political actors – in particular by various political societies – which signify different normative considerations.

Jurgen Habermas developed deliberative democracy to a new level of sophistication. In general terms, his principle idea is that modern social theory should be couched in terms of the self-other relationship, in which we communicate with the others as subjects, rather than perceiving them as objects. This inter-subjectivity of “undistorted communication” constitutes, according to Habermas, an “ideal speech situation”, shaped by a mutual

determination to avoid distortion and manipulation and reach understanding and consensus. Habermas substantiated his model through the following logical chain:

The social world as the totality of legitimately ordered interpersonal relations, is accessible only from the participant's perspective; it is intrinsically historical and hence has, if you will, an ontological constitution different from that of the objective world which can be described from the observer's perspective. The social world is inextricably interwoven with the intentions and beliefs, the practices and languages of its members." (Habermas, 1999: 38).

According to Habermas, if all participants of a certain discourse rationally accept the moral validity of a norm, their rational acceptance by itself "justifies the claim that the norm is worthy of recognition".

To further elaborate the notion of the discourse ethic, with its emphasis on inter-subjective communication under the conditions of the contemporary multi-cultured, multi-subject world, Habermas wrote:

Discourse ethics defends a morality of equal respect and solidaristic responsibility for everybody. But it does this in the first instance through a rational reconstruction of the contents of a moral tradition whose religious foundations have been undermined. If the discourse-theoretical interpretation of the categorical imperative remained bound to the tradition in which it originated, this genealogy would represent an obstacle to the goal of demonstrating the cognitive content of moral judgments *as such*. Thus it remains to provide a theoretical justification of the moral point of view itself. (Habermas, 1999: 39)

The discourse principle can serve as a mechanism through which interpreters from a specific moral/political tradition can "theoretically justify" their hermeneutics (interpretations of facts, knowledge or life) to the pluralist world.

"The discourse principle," Habermas wrote eloquently, "provides an answer to the predicament in which the members of any moral community find themselves when, in making the transition to a modern, pluralistic society, they find themselves faced with the dilemma that though they still argue with reasons about moral judgments and beliefs, their substantive background consensus on the underlying moral norms has been shattered." (Habermas, 1999, 39).

Theorists of deliberative democracy, including Habermas, make a special effort to distinguish their model from the romantic

false model of a formation of will a la Rousseau that was intended to establish the conditions under which the empirical wills of separate burghers could be transformed, *without any intermediary*, into the wills open to reason and oriented toward the common good (Habermas, 1992: 445)

To emphasize the difference of the "common sense" of deliberative democracy, B. Manin writes:

The source of legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals, but rather the process of its formation, that is, deliberation itself... A legitimate decision does not represent the will of all, but is one that results from the deliberation of all. It is the process by which everyone's will is formed that confers its legitimacy to the outcome, rather than the sum of already formed wills. (Quoted in Habermas, 1992: 446)

Habermasian theory of communicative action was further developed in Onuf's constructivism, which goes beyond interest in identities signified in narratives, stories and discourses (speech acts) and toward the intersection of signifying and doing. According to Onuf, the speech act agreements of communicative action make and re-make social structures. (Prugl, 1998: 128 - 129)

The Onufian notion of *rules* connects relatively constant social structures (institutions) and temporary agreements produced by Habermasian mutual understanding:

The normative force of a speech act agreement becomes a convention when others join in the agreement and repeat propositions with complementary content. Conventions become rules once people follow conventions as a matter of routine and once they recede from conscious deliberations. (Prugl, 1998: 129)

Thus, in the constructivist approach our worlds are being made by us (the agents, who are themselves made by these worlds) according to our inter-subjective understandings and through our rules (regimes or institutions).

Conclusions: Deliberative Democracy and Democratic Peace

It appears that a further exploration of the deliberative model of democracy would be useful, especially the parts concerned with the analysis of inter-subjectivity, "discursive will formation," and the *rules* (structures or institutions) through which inter-subjectivities happen and "solidify." This model of democracy, through its potential mode of response to contemporary threats, may have a high degree of practical (empirical) and academic utility for peace and international security in our pluralist world.

The first and rather obvious advantage of the deliberative model of democracy for promoting peace and international security is that this model emphasizes "will-formation" (i.e., agency development mechanisms), rather than "preference aggregation" (i.e. decision making mechanisms). It thus approaches peace-making through the creation of a "common pool" of interpretations of issues related to peace and justice.

The second advantage of the model is its focus on 'imagined' communities, rather than on geographically and politically defined citizenries of nation states. This quality is especially important (relevant) in today's globalized world where the flows of commodities, ideas, communication and influence are increasingly independent of national boundaries. In the words of Habermas, "Globalization raises questions about the fundamental presupposition of classical international law – the sovereignty of states and the sharp division between domestic and foreign policy." (Habermas, 1999: 174)

Even today's "democratic rejection of democracy" often happens in "post-Westphalian" terms that transcend national boundaries: I.e., nation states today frequently have to fight an elusive "globalized" enemy, which has no clear national affiliation. Accordingly, the democratic response to this threat may well have a better chance to succeed if it is also shaped in post-Westphalian terms. Deliberative democracy – with its emphasis upon the

“imagined community of interlocutors” rather than the “real” geographical or census’ community of citizens – speaks in post-Westphalian terms. (Benhabib, 2004; Besson, 2005; Elster, 1998)

Francis Cheneval profoundly explains the “globalizational,” post-Westphalian qualities of deliberative democracy:

Deliberative democracy stands for the movement of constant mental and ultimately real institutional transcendence of the factual law-giving community in the name of the open community of common sense. Deliberative theory highlights a very important, transcendental foundation of democratic theory. The latter consists of the imperative of constant communicative transcending of finite subjectivity, including finite peoplehood, in the name of reasonable communication within and without the bounds of basic structure. (Cheneval, 2006: 172)

The potential empirical contribution to peace and security of deliberative democracy and constructivism could come, not as a default or consequence of the establishment of democratic institutions (as was expected to happen in Iraq and elsewhere), but through constellations of (grass-roots **mutual**) understandings that grow from democratic international and (most importantly) cross-cultural deliberations. Forums for cross-cultural public deliberation could shape not just “other” public mentalities, but, no less importantly, the hegemonic Western public mentalities. Participants (or graduates) of such forums, being armed with a more adequate understanding of others, could become “agents of shared hermeneutics.” As such they might, in practical political terms, become lobbyists or active interest groups that could counter-balance currently more powerful poles of influence that carry clout with conventional, state-centric policy makers through the electoral process.

Academically, an expansion of the deliberative democracy model might well contribute to the development of international studies, especially, in the field of conflict analysis and resolution, by setting foundations for comparative and critical (multi)cultural political studies. A deliberative/constructivist approach to peace making – rather than the usual one coming from the rationalist (liberal or realist) perspective – could also bridge the empirical findings of democratic peace theory and the theoretical issues of the Third Debate (Lapid, 1989)

In order for the constellations (elements) of the imagined communities of (cross-cultural) common sense or for the heterogeneous agencies of shared hermeneutics to have a chance to develop, solidify and “conceptualize” themselves in sets of “rules,” there needs to be routine, trans-national and cross-cultural grass-roots deliberation. From such deliberation within the trans-national public sphere should emerge “discursive will formation.” **Routine** (rather than occasional) deliberation and resultant “discursive will formation” can only occur within enduring and supportive institutional frameworks (forums). Accordingly, the discussion and design of institutional frameworks of cross-cultural deliberative democracy may become important foci of the next wave of international democratization theory and practice. That processes might also lead to some new dimensions of the theory of democratic peace.

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